

Ever the Same

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Category: Doctor Who

Genre: Romance

Language: English

Characters: 12th Doctor, Rose T.

Pairings: 12th Doctor/Rose T.

Status: Completed

Published: 2016-04-12 02:56:14

Updated: 2016-04-12 02:56:14

Packaged: 2016-04-27 18:29:04

Rating: T

Chapters: 1

Words: 11,907

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Encore one shot in the "Run With You" Universe. The Doctor takes Rose on a special trip to mark a milestone in their marriage, as well as to apologize for recent events. But they wouldn't be them if they didn't find trouble when it should have been romance, and who are they to turn down the chance for adventure and mystery?

Ever the Same

Disclaimer: After all this time, I still don't own Doctor Who, it owns me. It's probably better that way.

Rose walked down the corridor of the TARDIS feeling particularly lovely. Wearing a gorgeous red dress that looked like it was from 1920s Earth, her hair in large curls, parted mostly to the right with a diamond barrette on the left, she was ready for party she hadn't known she was going to be attending. Her lips were painted red, and she put on her make-up a touch heavier than she had in centuries to play up the look of the era. Her heels clicked against the glass and metal floor in an oddly satisfying way.

The Doctor had been gone from their bed when she woke up, but he had left a red rose on his pillow along with a note.

Take the morning, relax, rest. I have something special planned for later. Meet you in the console room in a few hours.

She didn't need to be told twice.

But as the time passed, she began to miss her husband, ridiculously enough. She'd gone longer without him recently, leaving him in Pompeii for a week after he abandoned her, Clara, one of Clara's students, and a female explorer on the moon. And it wasn't so much that he simply left them there, but he forced them to make a decision

that felt decidedly like some strange pro-choice or pro-life debate. He knew as well as she did that there being a moon all through history meant that regardless of it somehow being an egg, something similar would replace it quick enough that if it did hatch it wouldn't matter. She'd been livid enough with him for pushing out an already apprehensive and uncertain Clara, his claiming no guilt or blame for the torment he put the girls through had her shoving him out the TARDIS doors before taking the time ship to see good ol' Jack and River.

The circumstances for today were different, though. There was no anger today, their argument and her annoyance blown over. There was only love, eagerness, and something incredibly special to celebrate.

So when she stepped into the console room, she sought out her husband with her eyes. When she found him, her grin stretched wider and her heart skipped a beat.

He was in a suit, black, and a waist coat over a slightly different white oxford than he usually wore. There was a white handkerchief in his left breast pocket, and he was wearing a tie for the first time in ages. He stood, hands in his pant pockets, waiting for her with a sly grin.

Rose giggled as she carefully moved down the stairs and headed toward him. She fingered the tie. "Couldn't decide between a bow tie, tie, or cravat?" She teased, tongue between her teeth.

"It fits with where we're going better." He replied. "Don't look too bad, do I?"

She ran her fingers over his short, silver strands before her hands rested on the back of his neck. "Handsome as always." She replied. "Felt us land, where are we?"

He reached behind him, taking her hands off his neck and holding on to one as he led her to the TARDIS doors.

This Doctor wasn't huge on physical affection, Rose's touch and hug being essentially the only one he'd accept. And even then, she learned, he still wasn't one for hugging anymore, and arms around his neck was dangerously close to an embrace.

He pulled the doors open and allowed her to step out first.

"Baggage car?" Rose asked as she looked at the luggage neatly placed on racks.

"Well, best place to park the Ol' Girl. She'd be a bit much to fit in our sleeper car." He said casually.

Rose stopped, spun on her heel, and looked at the mischievous grin coming over her husband's face. "Sleeper car? Are we â€|?"

He chuckled in his chest, love bursting through their bond as well as eagerness. "Your train awaits, my lady." He said, gesturing to the doors on the other end of the car.

Rose's breath caught as she slowly made her way toward it, stepping

through to what looked a bit like a corridor. The Doctor caught her hand, lightly holding her other arm.

"There were many trains to take the name _Orient Express_," He said next to her ear.

"We are not?" She asked with disbelief.

"Ah, ah, ah. There were many trains with the name, yes, but only one," He let go of her hand and reached forward, pushing open the door. "In space."

Inside was a splendid sight, reminding Rose equally of Agatha Christie novels as much as all _The Great Gatsby_ movies she'd seen over the centuries. And through the large train windows was the Universe in all its beauty. Rendered speechless, she ventured into the lounge room where a lovely female voice made a song from Rose's time sound completely appropriate for the 20's style of the party. Most everyone around them were socializing and drinking, sitting or standing around small tables positioned for the best view of the stars beyond. A few were dancing, but perhaps not with the enthusiasm Rose would expect from this sort of affair.

"Completely faithful recreation of the original Orient Express, except bigger and in space." The Doctor went on to explain as he dropped his hold on Rose's arm to bend it, offering the elbow to her. She took it gladly, leaning against his arm. "The rails are hyperspace ribbons, but in every other respect, identical. Painstaking attention to detail." He went on as he led her to a standing table near the few dancers. They both plucked up a champagne flute along the way, Rose taking a sip of the bubbly with a grin.

When they arrived at the table, the Doctor turned toward her. He lifted his champagne flute with a sparkle in his eye. "To my beautiful, wonderful wife, and a thousand years of marriage."

"Happy Anniversary, Doctor." She said as she gently clinked her glass against his. They each took a sip, and with a sigh of contentment, Rose shifted to lean against him. "This is wonderful, absolutely wonderful."

"Well, you deserve it. Putting up with me for a millennium, especially as of late. This regeneration seems grumpier than before, shorter tempered. I remind myself a lot of my earlier selves, just perhaps more handsome." Rose chuckled at his constant vanity. "I'm sorry, again, for my behavior. I'll try to be better, for you."

She lifted her head from his shoulder and looked up at him, meeting his eye and making sure the sincerity she felt was projected through to him. "I want you, regardless of how you are. Dealt with grumpy before, and I fell in love with you in that body. And after happy go-lucky for about nine hundred years, and manic energy for a hundred before that, bit of serious with a touch of grump isn't a bad change."

"Could be worse, then." He relented quickly.

She shook her head. "Dance with me?" She asked.

He twisted his mouth around, perhaps debating, then set his flute down on the table before taking hers and placing it next to his. "Of course." He said, taking her hand and leading her over to make shift dance floor.

"You know," Rose said after a few steps, "I actually wouldn't be surprised if Clara was going to stop traveling with us anyway. She was only part time, she didn't take your regeneration all that well, and then there's Danny."

"Ah, yes, P.E." The Doctor said with a twist of humor. "I must say, was relieved when it didn't turn out to be the bloke with the bow tie and the floppy hair. Would have made things a bit awkward."

Rose hummed in agreement.

Another reason she didn't mind that he went older: women didn't try to steal him in droves. When they first met Clara, it was helping her with an odd situation involving the Internet. They'd asked if she, the teacher who was a nanny that wanted to travel, would like to travel with them.

She did, but only part time. But being only part time, or bonding with Jenny when their daughter spent a couple decades traveling with them before going her own way, hadn't prevented Clara from developing an obvious crush on the Doctor. Rose had grown used to it, nearly found it amusing that yet one more woman disregarded her existence and fell for her husband. But it hadn't been long for Clara, perhaps a year after her part time travels started in her time, that the young man she desired disappeared.

And here it was, mere months for her later, and she had left the TARDIS.

"So older is good because now you're the only one who wants me?" He teased softly, voice beside her ear as he pulled her closer.

"Eavesdropping on my thoughts?" She countered with no malice.

"You sorta let that one slip through." He said. "Not that I'm complaining. Always good to hear one's bond mate approve of the new look, even if the reasons aren't always what we like."

Rose threw her head back in a laugh. "Fishing for compliments, you are." She said. "Love the gray, love the cheek bones, love the accent. And before you even say anything, love the lines, too. Don't make you look nearly as grumpy as you think."

"If you insist." He said.

They danced for an undetermined amount of time, at least from Rose's perspective. She was sure her husband knew down to the second how long they remained pressed together, her head resting on his shoulder, their slow movements flowing in time with the beat. When the current song ended they stepped apart, of the same mind to return to their table for nibbles and a drink.

A waitress brought by a tray of hors d'oeuvres, which the Doctor plucked a small plate of for he and Rose to share.

Over head there was a _ding_, and a male voice said, "Ladies and Gentlemen. If you would be good enough to look from the windows on the right of the train, you'll be able to see the soaring majesty of the Magellan black hole." Rose looked out their window, taking in the sight before her.

"I remember when this was all planets as far as the eye could see." The Doctor said as his hand came to the small of her back. "All gone now, gobbled up by that beast."

"Was this before or after you met me?" She asked, inclining her head toward him.

"After. I went to the planet Obsidian, the planet of perpetual darkness to lick my wounds and regain my pride. I didn't take rejection well, which eventually turned into me being a jealous sod a lot of the time. Though if I could have remembered that kiss you gave me on the Cupla ship, might not've been so terrified some pretty boy was going to take you away from me."

Rose hummed happily at the memory of the Cupla ship. "Was worth every second of you needing to forget, getting to snog you, that you, like that."

"I was surprised by how much it didn't bother me that you did that. I was already infatuated with you, couldn't stop thinking about you, but I had a lot of rules and you broke them when you sprung that on me. But Obsidian wasn't the only place I stopped along this route. Also had a lovely picnic wearing a gas mask on â€|."

"A picnic? With a gas mask?" Rose asked, not believing him for a moment.

He smirked. "Yes, a gas mask. Didn't eat much, and my bananas were ruined, but the view was lovely. Constant acid rain on Thedion Four, but worth the visit."

"That's a lie." Someone said just slightly behind them. Rose and the Doctor turned to see a blonde woman a few feet away, a champagne flute in hand and an overly distraught look in her eyes. "That's a lie, what you said. Thedion Four was destroyed thousands of years ago, so you couldn't have been there."

"Miss Pitt," A man caught the woman's attention. A moment later he came in to view. An employee of the train, that was for sure, but Rose wasn't sure what his authority was. It looked high, that's for certain. "Are you sure you wouldn't rather rest in your room?" He wasn't harsh in anyway, more gentle and sympathetic, if not a bit worried.

"That man's a liar." She said accusingly, pointing at the Doctor.

The man looked from Miss Pitt to the Doctor, offering him a quick, apologetic smile before turning to the accuser. "Perhaps you'd allow Mister Carlyle here to escort you back?"

Another man, younger, came around to stand beside her. "It'll be alright, miss. Just come with me."

Miss Pitt went without a fight, and when she and Carlyle disappeared, the other man shifted nervously to face them.

"Sorry about that." He said. "I suppose it's understandable in the circumstances. I don't believe we've been introduced. Captain Quell." He introduced himself with a tip of the hat.

"I'm Rose, and this is my husband," she didn't miss the wide eyed surprise that Quell quickly masked. "The Doctor."

His surprise returned again, "Ah, another one."

Rose looked over her shoulder, noting the Doctor's confusion. She searched her bond for the faint trace of another him, but didn't turn up anything. "Another Doctor?" She asked Quell.

"Yes." He said, and before Rose could ask for any other details, he continued. "We've got doctors and professors coming out of our ears on this trip. So, what are you a doctor of?"

"Now there's a question that's never asked often enough. Let's say æ|."

"Physics." Rose cut him off before his amped up rudeness could be inflicted upon the captain. "Astro and temporal physics." And then to change the subject, "I'm sorry. Miss Pitt? She alright? Seemed a bit upset there."

"You mean you don't know?" He asked, genuinely astonished. "Her mother passed away quite suddenly this afternoon. She went into hysterics, talking about a mummy or a monster, or something. No one saw what ever it was she saw, and then she died."

~DWDWDW~

Dinner was called shortly after Captain Quell had finished chatting with them, and Rose was admittedly surprised by the Doctor's lack of discussion when it came to what happened to the older woman.

Reaching her hand across the table, she covered his, stroking the wedding ring he'd taken to wearing in this incarnation. "You're closed off." She pointed out.

He looked about, confused and innocent seeming. "Not like we have our bond open all the time. It's be like a freeway of thoughts and emotions."

"'S our anniversary. Our thousandth anniversary, and you haven't done much talkin' or sharin' of any kind. I know you, Doctor, I know how you think." She waited for him to say something, but his blue gray eyes remained fixed on her and gave nothing away. "She died." Rose prodded.

The Doctor shrugged a bit too casually. "Old ladies die all the time, it's practically in their job description. She was over a hundred years old, not everyone can live over a thousand years." His lips quirked up at the last bit, and she shook her head and tried not to grin herself.

"She said she saw something." Rose reminded him quietly, leaning in toward him.

"A dying brain, lack of oxygen, hallucinations, simple explanation." The Doctor retorted. When Rose arched a brow, he sighed. "Alright, fine, I'm ninety-nine percent sure it was nothing."

"Ninety-nine percent?" Rose repeated.

"Fine, more like seventy-five." He countered.

"Right, and you know why?" She asked, dangling her fork over her chicken cordon bleu with her free hand. "'S us. Wouldn't be our anniversary if we didn't somehow find ourselves wrapped up in some sorta mystery or mishap."

"Two hundred and fifty, we were living next to Amy and Rory." He countered.

"And we were living there because we were watching those cubes."

"Four thirty-seven, Woman Wept. Again"

"Slipped on the ice, broke my leg. You took me to the nearest medical station and found ourselves held up by pain-killer addicted marshmallows."

"Eight twenty-nine," He lifted both brows, tilted his head, waited for it.

"Spent in a prison cell."

"Right." He said, brows dropping in a frown. "Well it's our thing, really. The bits in between, just happen to be a bit less between. And besides, we got married on the day you ran away with me, seems only fitting that this is how our life turned out."

"Right." Rose said, nodding. She picked at her food a bit before she was hit with emotions like a punch in the gut.

The Doctor opened his end of the bond, flooding her with how happy she made him, how much he still loved her, how much he â€¦

"Oh," She said on a breath, meeting her husband's gaze.

He seemed quite pleased with himself, grinning smugly. "Yes, oh." He said with a quick twitch of his eye brows. "So if you're quite finished with your meal, Ms Tyler."

She stood from the table, dropping her napkin by her plate as the Doctor stood as well. He took her hand and pulled her down toward the sleeper cars.

~DWDWDW~

He had his arms filled with Rose, her head resting on his chest between his hearts. She was warm, her skin silky smooth, perfect for trailing his fingers over. His touch traveled over her side, from the

junction where her arm met her torso down to where the blanket covered from her hip down. Her leg was looped over his, her toes still caressing the hairs on his leg even as she was essentially asleep. The Doctor never tired of nights like these, of her falling asleep with a blissful smile on her face.

He was still pretty boneless himself, and it was the only reason he wasn't already up and about, investigating this whole monster/mummy thing.

But the facts rolled around inside his head. The old woman was old, at least by normal human standards. And this was before the fifty-first century when people could really stretch their lives. She had been in a chair, some sort of life extender. Life support on wheels.

His mind slipped for a moment, briefly thinking to what it would have been like if Rose had remained completely human. He knew he'd have done the same thing Jenny did with Tim, and he would probably go back over and over to selfishly prolong Rose's life. In his darkest thoughts, he'd have strapped her in one of those chairs â€|.

The chair.

Was there any damage done to it? Was the battery still working? What was the chair reading as her health problems before passing?

The bonelessness disappeared, and the Doctor slowly and carefully slide out from under Rose.

She stirred anyway. "What's going on?" She asked sleepily, peeking at him through slits in her eye lids.

He bent and kissed her quickly. "Sleep, Love. I just want to go check on something." He said as he grabbed his pants and trousers and pulled them on.

Rose sat up, a stunning picture as she pulled the blanket to her chest, her hairstyle intact if not a bit more tousled. Her painted lips turned down in a frown. "Everything alright?"

"Just can't sleep," He said as he pulled on his oxford, adjusting the collar and putting on his waist coat.

"Can think of other ways you can spend your time not sleeping." She said coyly.

"Tempting as that is, not what's on my mind." He said as he tied his western style tie.

Rose shrugged, and he knew she wasn't the least bit offended. "Want me to come along? Gonna take a moment for me to get ready."

"You should sleep, Rose." He said as he picked up his jacket from the floor, putting it on with flourish.

"Not gonna sleep now. 'Sides, spent so much of the day lounging and resting, not that tired."

"How about I meet you in the lounge, then?" He suggested as he

slipped on his boots. He came over to the bed, sitting somewhat in front of her as he tied his laces.

The Doctor felt her hand running up in his back in a soothing way. "Can do." She said, and when he straightened up again she planted a kiss on his cheek. "Just don't go finding too much trouble without me."

"Better with two," He smirked.

"Course." She said, kissing his lips in a quick peck and patting his back before taking her weight off him. "Seriously, though. Be careful, yeah?"

"Of course." He said, and he meant it. He liked this body, he liked that she liked it, he wasn't about to give it up any time soon. He gave her a reassuring grin, a wink for good measure, and then left the room.

~DWDWDW~

It took Rose longer to get dressed than she'd have liked. Garters and belts, practical lingerie that looked impractical, stockings and slinky dresses. Really, it shouldn't have surprised her that the TARDIS had laid out such exquisite items, but when trouble was finding them, they were a touch annoying.

Once she was ready, she stepped out of the sleeper car she and the Doctor had shared.

Before she could get far, the woman who complained about the Doctor in the lounge a few hours ago passed her by as if in a trance. She had changed for sleep with a dressing gown on, make up still in place if not a bit smudged, and held a silver heel like a weapon.

"Miss Pitt?" Rose asked, but the woman kept going without looking back.

Rose debated, biting her lip and feeling a bit torn, then changed direction and followed Miss Pitt to where ever she was going.

Inside the luggage car, Rose caught up with the woman who stared at a secure door as the grip on her shoe tightened.

"You alright, Miss Pitt?" Rose asked, making to touch the woman on her shoulder before she turned around.

"My name's Maisie, and I'm not mad." She said in way of introduction.

"Never said you were, mate." Rose said kindly, offering a friendly smile. "What you doing out 'n' about dressed like that? 'Cause a riot."

Maisie eyed her over, then turned and touched something on the panel by the door she was standing in front of. "Computer, open the door." She asked.

"Call me Gus," The polite, male voice that announced sights on the tour responded. "I'm afraid this door can only be opened by executive

authority."

Maisie looked back at Rose, her lip quivering.

"Hey, Gus." She said, stepping around Maisie and caressing the panel. "Who's authority do we need?" She asked.

There was a pause, "As an executive guest, you may pass through."

Rose startled. "Right, okay, thanks. What do I need to do?" She asked. The doors opened in response. "Well, come on." She said, gesturing for Maisie to follow her inside. "What did you need in here for so badly?" Rose asked as she followed her inside.

"They wouldn't let me see her body." Maisie said, heading right for something, or rather someone, covered in a tarp, laying on the table. "I just â€¦ I had to see her body."

Rose nodded, folding her arms and looking about the room. In the corner there was a sarcophagus.

A chill went over her as she remembered the mention of there being a mummy on board, of how that was what Maisie's mother, the very woman under the white sheet, had supposedly seen before her death. Rose cautiously moved toward it.

"_Doctor." _She said through their bond as she approached the mummy's resting place. "_Think I found something._" She sent him what she saw through their bond as she lifted the skirt of her dress and removed her barely used, but still handy, sonic screwdriver. She still loved how it looked like the one her first two Doctors had, and was colored the same as the one her more recent two had. She still left it up to him to do the scanning most times, but since he wasn't there, she was going to have to do the honors.

"_Well, that's certainly interesting." _He replied. "_I've been chatting up one of the professors. There's something here, something called the Foretold. Old legend among the stars. He knew about it."_

"_And what is a 'Foretold'?"_ Rose asked as she scanned the sarcophagus.

"_Mythical Mummy that legend says if you see it, you're a dead man."_ He replied as the readings came up.

Rose frowned. The readings came back that it wasn't a sarcophagus at all, but a stasis chamber. Before she could say anything to her husband over their bond, Maisie took in a sharp, deep breath.

"Do you ever wish â€¦ bad things on people?" She asked Rose, and Rose turned to see her gently placing the tarp back over her mum.

"Try not to, but it happens. Sometimes â€¦ sometimes you can't help but want it to, ya know?" Rose said gently.

Maisie stared at the covering a moment. "She wasn't really my mum. She just made me call her that. She was my gran. Do you know why I wanted to see her body?" Maisie asked.

"To make sure she passed on." Rose said as she came up beside the blonde woman. She put a hand on Maisie's back, between her shoulder blades, getting her to look at her. "It was her you wished bad things upon, wasn't it?"

Maisie looked sheepish but nodded. "Yeah." She said. "I'd been picturing her dying for years. Like a day dream. Not really meaning it, at least, I don't think I did. But now it just feels like I made this happen."

"No," Rose reassured, "No, you didn't. Been around a long time, me, and I know one thing for sure and that's coincidences are terrible things. And that sometimes you don't always get what you want, and when you do, find out you may not want it. And sometimes you don't realize how much you want something 'til you got it."

Maisie snorted, "Yeah, you sound like you've been around a while."

Rose bit her lip. "Yeah, sometimes too long." She said it mostly to herself, but Maisie craned around and looked at her. Knowing she was caught, she gave a tiny grin. "I gave up my whole life, my whole world, to be with my husband. Don't regret the decision in the least, but I didn't realize at the time what I was actually missing out on."

"Husband?" Maisie said, frowning a bit as she glanced at Rose's hand. "You don't mean that old bloke you were in the lounge with."

Rose laughed. "Yeah, that's him." She said as she gently moved her hair a bit further out of her face. "Age difference is a bit, but I love him. Have for, blimey, thousand years, and it's never changed, even if he does." Maisie didn't say anything, simply staring at her like she wasn't sure she believed it. "Tell you what, was supposed to meet him in the lounge. Come with me, have a drink, you can tell me all about how horrid your gran was, and I won't judge. Not in the least. My gran could be just as nasty a piece of work, so I'm sure I could throw in a few stories, too."

Maisie grinned, genuinely grinned, and nodded. "Yeah, that sounds nice."

Rose took her hand and headed to the doors. They opened promptly enough, but that wasn't what gave Rose pause.

Just around the corner was the TARDIS, and while the Old Girl was pretty quiet for the most part, Rose realized she couldn't feel her hum. A glance at it, and she thought she saw the faint shimmer of some sort of force field. She frowned, but continued on, feeling the need to be as close to the Doctor as she could get.

~DWDWDW~

"Did you get a look at what was inside that sarcophagus?" The Doctor strode toward Rose in quick steps. He had rolls of paper tucked under his arm, and a maintenance worker hot on his tail.

"Hello, Love," She said with a slight grin over her second martini, catching Maisie's eye and noting the young blonde chuckling.

"Well, you'll forgive my abrupt greeting. There's been another death on the Orient Express." He said slightly clipped and not at all in a way that surprised Rose.

"Your husband sure has a way of making a girl feel special." Maisie commented dryly.

The Doctor ignored her, nudging Rose's mind like a consistent tap on the shoulder, trying to get her attention. She shifted in her seat toward him, no hint of a smile.

"Wasn't a sarcophagus." She said as she picked up her martini glass and took a sip. "Was a stasis chamber. Rather morbid one, really. Doubt there's a mummy inside."

He frowned, mouth twisting in thought as Captain Quell strode up to him, two armed guards just behind him.

"Doctor, we have a slight problem." He said, straightening his spine and tilting his head in a way that was clearly meant to intimidate. "I have spoken to head office, you are not a mystery shopper."

"Mystery shopper?" Rose mused, arching her brow at her husband.

"Psychic paper, he read his worst nightmare." He replied to Rose before he turned to look at Quell. "How many people have to die before you stop looking the other way?" He asked the Captain.

"Now, gentlemen." Rose said smoothly as she set her martini glass on the table and stood up. "Let's not go to insulting one another. Maybe we should ask the Captain why no one was willing to let poor Maisie see her mama? Wouldn't have anything to do with the creepy coffin in the same room, hmm?"

Quell frowned, obviously more confused than anything, when gunfire broke out.

Rose placed herself in front of the Doctor, reaching behind her and half guiding him to stand with his back to the window while she assessed the situation.

"Get back! Stay away!" A guard yelled, firing more rounds into thin air.

"What do you think you're doing, man?" Quell asked, moving to him and trying his best to restrain him. The guard tossed him off, tossing the gun aside as he pleaded for something to stop. He fell against a table, leaning away from something, sobbing even as Quell shouted orders at him.

Then all at once, it stopped.

The lounge remained quiet as everyone slowly got up from where ever they happened to duck for cover. The Doctor gripped Rose's arms gently, stepping out from behind her, following as a man in a white lab coat and Quell approached the guard.

The man in a lab coat, a doctor, Rose would guess, checked the guard's pulse. He shook his head.

"It turns out, three." Quell said as he removed his hat and looked to the Doctor. "The amount of people that had to die before I stopped looking the other way."

"Same as the others?" The maintenance man asked the Doctor.

The Doctor's face tightened in unhappy ascent as he watched the guards that were likely there to arrest him originally now carry out their comrade.

"Ladies and gentlemen, could I have a moment of your time, please?" The Doctor said, turning about to look at everyone in the room.

"At least he's being polite," Rose mumbled as she plucked up her martini glass and took a sip.

"There's a monster on this train that can only be seen by those about to die. If you do see it, you will have exactly sixty-six seconds left in which to live. But that isn't even the strangest thing. Do you know what it is?" The Doctor said, pointing to everyone in the room. "You. The passengers. Experts in alien biology, mythology, physics. If I was putting together a team to analyse this thing, I'd pick you. And I think somebody already has."

As he spoke, Rose felt the train slowing down. She set down her martini glass and strode toward him, straining to hear the engines and having a hard time finding them.

"Someone of immense power and influence has orchestrated this whole trip. Someone who I have no doubt is listening to us right now." The Doctor turned his head toward the ceiling. "So, are you going to step out from behind the curtain and give us our orders?"

The room stayed silent until the maintenance guy said, "The engines. They've stopped."

"Thought as much." Rose said with a bit of annoyance.

The lights flickered, and the Doctor twitched his eyebrows, looking at her with eagerness. "Anniversaries. Never boring." He said with a growing grin.

The lounge started changing, tables disappearing, changing to something else. As more things popped up they started to look familiar to Rose. This Doctor, more than any of her others, liked to work his mind. Complex mathematical equations that made even her fast thinking brain spin long before she'd come close to understanding. And science. Once upon a time if he wasn't in bed when she woke up, she'd find him in the console room. Tinkering, reading, knitting on a few occasions in his last body. But this time if he wasn't at his black board, he was in his lab playing with chemicals and testing theories.

Sometimes it was annoying, but mostly it was endearing.

"TARDIS could use some upgrades, judging by these things." She noted as the passengers started to fade from view.

"Teleporter?" The maintenance man asked as a majority of the guests started disappearing as well.

"No." The Doctor replied. "Hard light holograms. They were never really here. Fake passengers to make up the numbers."

"Sorry, don't believe we've met." Rose said to the maintenance man with a warm smile as she offered him her hand. "Seems we'll be in a hostile situation together, and my husband already knows you. Rose Tyler."

"Perkins, chief engineer." He said, shaking her hand.

"Good morning, everyone." Gus the computer said. "Around the room you will find a variety of scientific equipment. Your goal is to ascertain the Foretold's true nature, probe for weaknesses with a view to capture, after which we will reverse engineer its abilities. Isn't this exciting?"

"Reverse engineer its abilities? You want to make it a weapon?" Rose asked.

"Correct you are." Gus replied a touch too cheerfully.

"If you can't capture it yourself, means you can't control this thing. And yet, somehow you got it on board. How?" The Doctor asked the ceiling.

On the far wall, a scroll dropped down, revealing characters that the TARDIS wouldn't or couldn't translate.

"There is an artifact, an ancient scroll. I have highlighted it for your convenience. For reasons currently unknown, the Foretold appears in the vicinity of the artifact."

"And kills at regular intervals." The Doctor noted.

"Then just maybe we should throw this thing out the airlock." Quell said, starting to push past. Rose reached out and grabbed his wrist, stopping him even as he tried hard to get loose. He looked back, annoyed at first, then surprised when he saw who was keeping him held back.

"Wouldn't do that, mate. Sentient computer, scroll brought on board, likely protected. Might get a bit of a shock if you try." She warned him.

Quell pulled his arm, and she let go, making him stumble a bit. But he straightened his jacket and didn't try to go after the scroll.

"What if we say no?" One of the men asked. "Down tools, refuse to work?"

"That is your choice, of course. But it would be very upsetting were you all to die at the hands of the Foretold." Gus said with that usual polite, happy tone.

"So hurry up before it kills you." Perkins grumbled.

"You pointed out the passengers." Rose said to the Doctor. "All professors and Doctors. Can't be coincidental."

"'Fraid not," He said, his accent thickening. "As it is, we've had a long standing invitation, as far back as before Melody was born. It seemed like an excellent time to make good on the offer."

"Because a quiet anniversary wouldn't have been nice after a thousand years?" She noted.

"It's the Orient Express in space, how could I not take you. And besides, not like I knew there was a murderous being of legend on board. But it does make one wonder, how are we or anyone supposed to study a creature that they can't even see?" The turned his head toward the ceiling. "We don't even know what the species is."

Rose waited for Gus to have an argument to that.

Instead, the lights flickered.

"Perkins, start the clock," The Doctor said, and Perkins withdrew a stop watch on a chain. The Doctor looked to Maisie almost expectantly.

"Approximately one point eight meters tall." The man who demanded to know what would happen if they didn't work suddenly said as he gazed at the scroll. "Actually, seeing it in the flesh isn't nearly as rewarding as I thought it might be."

The Doctor turned toward him, and the spark of surprise that came off the Doctor spiked Rose's curiosity. She noted the man looked terrified even as he put on his blue tinted, tiny glasses as if to observe something.

"Oh dear, hard cheese, what can you see? Details." The Doctor said as he turned toward the poor man.

"Yes, yes, of course, of course." The man stammered.

Rose said his proper name through their bond with a chastising tone, but the Doctor continued to look at the professor.

"_He only has sixty-six seconds before he's gone, and he needs to tell us what he sees or this is fruitless_."

She wanted to argue, but knew he had a point.

"Uh, well, it just sort of looks like er, a man in bandages." He said as he started backing away, the Doctor and Perkins following him.

"Like a mummy?" Rose asked.

"Yes, like a proper mummy that one would find in a museum. Old, yellowed, some wrapping falling off in places. Flesh, some of the flesh is visible, and â€| no eyes. Still has a bit of the nose, and teeth. It's â€| it's moving slow, and it's as if it's â€| it's reaching for me." He turned to the Doctor.

"Good, good, what else? The smallest detail might help save the next one." The Doctor said.

"The next one? You mean you can't save me?" The man asked with genuine shock, whipping off his glasses.

"Well, that is implied, isn't it?" The Doctor countered.

"Oi, shut it." Rose said as she strode toward the poor man. He gasped in horror a moment, then looked between her and something she couldn't see. "We're sorry. If there were away, we'd do it. Can't help you, but you can help us. Help the next. Die a hero.

He looked at her with pitiful sadness. "I want to bargain for my life." He said.

"What?" The Doctor stammered.

"Well, it says, some of the myths say if you find the right word, if you make the right offer, then it lets you go."

"That's good. That's good, that helps." Rose encouraged as she gripped his shoulder.

"No, it doesn't, tell us what you see." The Doctor snapped.

"This is my life, my death." The man stated fiercely, turning to the spot Rose could see nothing in. "I'm going to fight for it how I want. I give you €|."

"10 seconds." Perkins warned, and Rose shot him a glare that startled him.

"I give you my soul, I confess my sins." The man beside Rose grabbed her hands and moved her away from him. She stumbled away, surprised by the force and conviction. "I give you all my worldly goods. Only, please, please, please, no!" He begged, his growing wider.

Suddenly he stopped, eyes wide, sliding down to the floor.

"Zero." Perkins said flatly.

The same man who checked over the guard darted forward, and Rose stepped out of the way.

"We apologize for any distress you may have just experienced." Gus's voice broke over the room, something on a nearby monitor flickering with change. Perkins went to investigate it as Gus continued. "Grief counseling is available on request. On the bright side, I'm sure you've collected a lot of data. Well done, everyone!" The voice said perkily.

"It's recording every death." Perkins noted as the Doctor approached him.

"Of course it is, that's why we're here." The Doctor said, a mix of annoyance at condescension, and only one directed at the man before him. He then turned to the ceiling. "That's why we're here: to study our own demise. Got news for you, might take longer than you think in some cases."

Rose moved to her husband's side, clutching his hand. "_We're in trouble._"

"_May not be as bad as we think._" He said, meeting her eye before glancing quickly at something on one of the tables that looked like a scanner Rose used while working in the shop thousands of years ago. "_It's a device used to scan chemical reactions in the brain. I use the sonic, might be able to modify it to take what ever it is that draws the Foretold to the victim away from them to give to me._"

"_To _me_ you mean." _Rose countered, her eyebrow arching a touch. "_Not gonna let you do it until we know what it is we can do or say to stop it. Even if it gets down to just you and me_."

"Are you two planning on just gazing lovingly in one another's eyes?" Perkins asked with a bit of a smirk.

The Doctor grinned. "You know what they say about married couples: stay together long enough, you can communicate with just a look." He went off to look at the monitor, read what ever information was on the screen.

Rose, in the meantime, had to wonder what she could do in the meantime.

"Gus?" She called as a thought occurred to her.

There was a chime. "Yes, miss Tyler? How can I be of assistance?"

"Oh, Rose, please." Rose smiled. She moved to a free monitor, caressing the side with one finger. "Do we have stay in this room alone in order to study the Foretold? Or am I able to go check on something?" She directed her question to the ceiling.

"You're not seriously flirting with the computer?" The Doctor asked incredulously. "Not sure I want you around Harkness any more, if that's the case. Bad enough he's been hanging around our youngest daughter a little too much."

Rose shifted her gaze to the Doctor, not needing the bond to tell him to shut up.

"You may go anywhere on the train not currently restricted." Gus replied.

"Brilliant." Rose replied with a tongue touched grin. "Thank you darling." Then turned sharply and headed back toward the luggage cars.

"Where are you off to?" The Doctor questioned.

"Being curious." She countered as she lingered near the door.

"Curiosity killed the cat." Perkins said with apprehension.

"Good thing I got a lotta lives." She said, winking at the Doctor

before she left the car.

She moved swiftly to the luggage car, not wanting to miss out on the possibility that someone may become a victim before she returned.

Going to the vault, she touched the secure pad and the doors slid open. Inside, she withdrew her sonic from its spot on her garter, moved for the stasis chamber, and used the screwdriver to open it up.

There was a beep, and then a click as the lid opened up a small amount, just enough to slide her hand in and open it herself.

Bubble wrap and papers were inside, and nothing else. Grabbing the papers, she left the room and returned to what used to be the lounge.

"Find anything, Love?" The Doctor asked, the scanner in one hand, his sonic in the other. Perkins stood beside him like a shadow, and a quick scan of the room found Maisie assisting one of the young researchers.

"Just these." Rose said as she showed the Doctor what she found. "Sorta look like report cards, they do. Mean, look at this one? _The Gloriana_, _time lapsed three days, all died, performance poor." She said, glancing up to see her husband frowning thoughtfully. "_The Valiant Heart_. _Time lapsed, thirty-six hours. Forty-two passengers and crew, four died, Performance promising."

"Wait, what?" The Doctor said, looking from her to the report. "Why? Why only four dead?"

"_The Valiant Heart_ went missing." Maisie said, earning their attention. "About four years ago. My fianc  was on it. It was never found."

"_The Gloriana_ went missing too." Someone in the room said, "two years back."

"Still doesn't answer why this report has only four listed as dead." The Doctor said.

"Unless that's how many the Foretold killed before â€| something else happened. Like a crash, or worse." Rose pondered.

"Or maybe it was a difference of the kind of passenger." Perkins suggested. He pointed to the papers in Rose's hand. "Scientists and the like on the _The Valiant Heart_, there were only four of them. There was the staff, and a bunch of other proper passengers, but there was only four in those fields. And _The Gloriana_, looks like they were nearly all in the field."

"So the scientists all get picked up by the Foretold, trip's over. No one left to research it, to learn about its weaknesses, to capture it. So how does the Foretold chose?" The Doctor pondered out loud. "Obviously the computer doesn't do it for it. Else out of the forty-two passengers and crew, those four would have been the last to go." He then turned to Quell. "I want full histories on all the victims. Medical, social, personal."

"Well done." Gus praised.

"Don't mention it." The Doctor said as Perkins plucked up a small tablet. "And where have you had that tucked away?" The Doctor asked Rose as he tapped her sonic. She lifted her skirt enough to show him the holster in her garter and tucked away her screwdriver at the same time. "Must have missed that earlier." He said, barely pulling his eyes away from them.

"Surprised you did for how long your eyes and hands lingered on them." She replied with a cheeky grin.

"Don't do that." He warned in a good nature way. "Don't distract me like that when we have a job to do, a mystery to solve. Wouldn't do any of us any good if I'm thinking about your legs in stockings."

"Yes, wouldn't want your magnificent Time Lord brain fixated on thirty-sixth century nylon." Rose mused.

"I have the results," Perkins interrupted. "But there doesn't seem to be any pattern. Their travel history, interests, health. It's all over the shop."

The Doctor turned to Perkins, hands against his hips. "Health? Missus Pitt, the first victim, she was over a hundred years old."

"Oh, but the next to go, the chef, was young and fit." Perkins pointed out.

"The chef was ill." Quell admitted, looking down in what seemed like shame before turning to the lot of them. "A rare blood disorder. Not contagious, but we kept it quiet."

"He worked in a kitchen." Rose nodded. "My time, that woulda had you fired on spot, health board shutting down the kitchen for a bit to decontaminate."

"What about the guard?" The Doctor asked with a thoughtful pout.

"He wasn't ill, as such, but he did have synthetic lungs implanted last year."

"Professor Moorhouse was fine, physically, but suffering from regular panic attacks. Started after a car crash last year." Perkins pointed out.

"It's picking off the weakest first." The Doctor said as he looked to Rose. She doubted he would ever want her to point out that there was a flash of relief in his eyes. It had been thousands of years, and had been proving countless times over that she was always going to be there with him. But she was sure he was relieved she'd likely not be an intended target until they made her one. "It's sensing illness somehow. The fake organs, even psychological issues." The Doctor said, and Quell looked alarmed. The Doctor continued. "But this is good news, because it means we can work out who is next."

"Captain?" Rose asked gently as she approached him. She put a hand on his shoulder. "You alright?"

"Your husband says it can sense psychological issues. Doesn't bode well for me." He said with a sad smile.

"Why's that?" Rose asked, searching the man's face.

"The Doctor, in my office, he said I had lost the stomach for a fight because I was wounded in battle. But that's not quite it. My unit was bombed, I was the sole survivor. Not a scratch on me. But post-traumatic stress nightmares."

"Hey," She said, forcing him to look at her. "Me and the Doctor? We know a thing or two about that, yeah? Both of us have been through more wars, seen more traumatic things than I care to recall. Get nightmares too, you know. So does he."

"I can't sleep without pills." Quell confessed. The lights above their head flickered, and Quell's eyes shifted to something on the other side of the room. "Almost feels out of focus. Gives me a headache just looking at it." He said, slowly reaching for his gun.

"No, not here." Rose said, pulling the gun from his hand and tossing it aside. She then looked to her husband. "Give me the scanner thing."

The Doctor came across the room, holding her eye, the feeling of fear crashing against her mind in waves as he handed the scanner to Rose.

She shifted quickly, pointing it at Quell's head, and pulling the trigger to get the reading.

"I wouldn't use that, Miss Tyler." Gus said. "Anyone in the room but you may face down the Foretold."

"Sorry, Gus." She said wincing as she put the scanner to her head and pulled the trigger again.

Her mind swam with a multitude of images of everything she'd ever done, ever experienced with the Doctor. Daleks on the Game Station, Werewolf in Scotland, nearly falling into the void, the Year that Never Was, Pompeii, facing She and having to shoot herself in order to ensure the safety of everyone. Thousands of experiences of the worst kind came and went through her eyes, and when she opened her eyes, the Foretold was there, coming after her.

"Miss Tyler, I must insist that you release yourself of the Foretold's hold and transfer it to a more suitable victim."

"Gus, darling, bugger off." She said, her chest feeling constricted as she watched its slow movements coming toward her. "It's so old, 's ancient. Exactly how the other bloke described him, not sure what else I can add." She said as she stood still and watched it come over her.

"Love, what do you see?" She heard her husband ask before he passed right through the mummy.

"Saw you walk through it like it was nothing." She said. "Bit

disturbing that."

"Move, Rose. Move quick, see if it follows you." He instructed.

"I find it disturbing that your wife had taken the burden away from me and you are allowing her to!" Quell snapped.

"Miss Tyler, please, relinquish the Foretold's hold and transfer it to a more suitable victim." Gus rambled on again as Rose ran through the Foretold, past the Doctor, to the other side of the car. She turned, finding it had teleported close to her.

"It teleported." She said, staying still as the distance was quickly disappearing between it and her. "Doctor?" She panted.

"Don't worry, Love." He said, and a glance at him allowed her confidence that he had, in fact, closed the bond. Otherwise the pain in his eyes, the panic in his posture, would have been felt just as strongly by her.

She eyed the Foretold as it lifted its two decaying hands up by her head. "It's going to put its hands on my head." She said. "Think this is it. I'll see you on the other side." She said as she closed her eyes.

The pain was terrible, like she was being ripped apart and drained all at once. Her face was screwing up in agony whether she wanted it to or not, and before she could cry out, to call for her husband, the world went black.

~DWDWDW~

The Doctor could feel the tension in the room as Rose died and he didn't immediately go to her side. He withdrew his sonic, pointed it at her, scanned the results of her body post-mortem all while trying to breathe around the lump in throat.

It never got easier.

"You're sick." Quell said. "Allowing her to do that, what kind of husband are you?" He demanded of the Doctor.

He whirled around on the Captain, the Oncoming Storm present as the grief and pain of witnessing Rose's death raged inside him.

"She died to save your life, show some respect!" The Doctor snapped.

"Umm," Perkins said, drawing their attention. "I think I know why Gud didn't want Rose to do it."

The Doctor went to the window that Perkins was looking at, observing the pots and pans, as well as the entire kitchen staff, floating in space. Their bodies were iced over, as was the food, the kitchenware relatively unharmed.

"I'm sorry. I know this all must be distressing for you. But if you are disobedient again, I will decompress another area with less valuable passengers." Gus warned.

"So no more feeding the chemical signatures drawing the Foretold to Rose. Got it. But do me a favor, Gus. Any one on this train that's not important, release them. Us here, in the lab, the luggage car with the sarcophagus, we're all you need. People lose luggage all the time, symptom of travel. Let the others live, uncouple these cars from the rest of the train, send the rest on their way."

The Doctor waited, his hearts pounding in his chest as he waited.

He heard the engines start, and he broke out into a smile. There were some disheartened looks as the sounds of the train faded off, but the Doctor ignored them.

"There. Now if we're disobedient, as you said, we're the only passengers left for you to take your displeasure out on." The Doctor said as he went to kneel by Rose. He brushed her cheeks, feeling her vital signs and mind sparking up again.

"What sort of Doctor are you?" Quell asked. "Bargain to let the others go, sure. But think of us as expendable. Your wife already â€¦."

Rose interrupted him with a gasp as she gulped a lungful of air. Her eyes opened wide, searched, and when she saw the Doctor, she threw herself into his arms.

"That was awful. It was the worst." She said in a near sob. "I would rather have a bomb strapped to my chest than experience that again." She said as he kissed all over her face, soothing her as best he could.

"It's fine, you're fine, you're here." He said, clutching her close against his chest as he looked over his shoulder at Quell.

He gaped, nearly looking afraid as much as he looked in awe at Rose in the Doctor's arms. He glanced at the window where they had seen the kitchen staff float by, and the Doctor shook his head infinitesimally.

Rose gripped his jacket and shirt in her fists, taking deep, steadying breaths, composing herself.

"It was unlike any death I've ever experienced." She said as she eased off him. "It was like â€¦ like being drained of all my life force. Sucked it right out of me."

"So it's not just a mummy, it's a vampire." Perkins said.

The sonic beeped, giving back the results of his scan of Rose. "Seems so." The Doctor mumbled as he stood and helped Rose to her feet. "All of Rose's energy was drained on a cellular level. Which is why it felt so different for you, because you've never been drained like that."

"Hopefully it will never happen again." She said, taking a slight step away from him.

Knowing she was alright now, or at least as alright as she could be, the Doctor kissed her on the forehead and stepped away. He ran all the possibilities through his mind, and there was one thing Rose

described that really stuck out.

"Teleportation, that means tech. Tech that drains a life force, tech that takes sixty-six seconds to do something. Charge? Maybe, but why? Technology in this century, sixty-six seconds takes too long. So it's a timer for something. But why take that time, why not just pounce?" He pondered animatedly, gesturing about.

"Phase?" Perkins suggested thoughtfully. "Moving energy out of phase, that takes about a minute, doesn't it?"

"That's why only the victims can see it." The Doctor agreed, pointing to Perkins, feeling his eyes light up as the puzzle pieces started coming together. "It takes them out of phase so it can drain their energy. You, sir, are a genius!" He smiled wide. "This explains everything! Apart from what it is, and how it's doing it. Sorry, I jumped the gun there with the 'you're a genius, that explains everything' remark."

"Hey, be nice. Didn't see you thinkin' of that." Rose said as she leaned against the far wall, arms folded just under her chest. She frowned. "Strange. I don't really remember it. I remember the experience, the feeling, but not the mummy. 'S just gone from my head."

"You don't always remember your deaths." The Doctor reminded her, and she nodded in agreement.

"You mean you've died before?" Quell asked, seeming to have just found his voice.

"More times than I'd like to admit." Rose replied with a sigh.

"So who would be next?" Quell asked. "If it's going after psychological issues as well."

"I believe we know." One of the other doctors in the room said as she brought over her tablet and showed him.

"Ah, of course," He said as he read the results of the simulation. "That makes perfect sense."

~DWDWDW~

Rose crossed the room to the Doctor, feeling the tingles of panic and acceptance as he looked at the tablet in his hands. She looked over his shoulder.

"Sure Gus isn't having any affect?"

"If he did, this wouldn't be the results." He replied quietly. "I just watched the love of my many lives die, my grief would have affected all my biochemistry even if only temporary. Maisie, she would have been next had it not been for what you have done."

"What if we can't stop it?" Rose said.

"One minute with me and this thing is over." He promised, cupping her cheek and getting her to look at him. "And if, for whatever reason, sixty seconds isn't enough, it's been a fantastic thousand

years."

Rose covered his hand with hers. "I wouldn't have missed it for the world." She promised, leaning and giving him lingering kiss despite feeling the eyes of everyone in the room on them.

The lights flickered overhead. "It's time." He said.

"Make it count." She told him, stepping away and watching the man work.

He turned around, stared at a spot that looked utterly empty, and smiled. "Hello. I'm so pleased to finally see you. I'm the Doctor, and I will be your victim this evening. Are you my mummy?" He asked as he went right up to where he likely saw it.

Rose hung her head, shaking it before looking up and watching him through threatening tears.

"But you can't hurt me until my time is up," The Doctor continued as he backed up on instinct, continually looking at the scroll on the back wall. "So, are there magic words? Is there a way to stop you in your tracks? There's something visible under the bandages, markings like the ones on the scroll." He ran to it, taking a really long look at it. "A tattered piece of cloth attached to a length of wood that you will kill for."

"Thirty seconds," Perkins announced.

Cold fear shot through Rose, feeling vulnerable for the first time in a long time. Thirty seconds, and she may just be taking her last breaths. She imagined the Doctor didn't believe he would regenerate from this, all the energy drained, leaving none for the process. This might just be it, the last run.

"That doesn't sound like a scroll," The Doctor mused. "That sounds like a flag! And if that sounds like a flag, if this is a flag." He said, looking back and forth between the scroll, or flag, and where the Foretold likely was. "That means that you are a soldier, wounded in a forgotten war thousands of years ago. But they've worked on you, haven't they, son? They've filled you full of kit. State of the art phase camouflage, personal teleporter."

"Ten seconds." Perkins announced, and Rose's heart was beating so hard she wasn't sure she'd live long enough to pass with her husband.

"And all that tech inside you, it just won't let you die, will it? It won't let the war end. It just won't let you stop until the war is over. We surrender!"

The Doctor had rushed it all out, lifted his hands beside his head, and Rose exhaled a breath she didn't know she was holding. A blink, and the Foretold was visible. And from the collective gasp, it was visible to everyone.

The poor thing, slow in its movements, lifted its arm to salute the Doctor before lowering his hand and placed it somewhat over its heart.

"Do I start the clock?" Perkins asked, confused.

"No, the clock has stopped." The Doctor replied, a smile lighting up his eyes. "You're relieved, soldier."

With a gasp, the Foretold disintegrated.

Rose was in the Doctor's arms in a flash, the two of them gripping each other tightly, breathing one another in. She felt his hand move up her leg, beneath her skirt. She was about to say something when she felt his fingers lingered on the top of her garter. He pulled the sonic, pointed it at something, and after a few seconds he put it back.

"What are you up to?" Rose asked him, lips against his neck.

"_Have a feeling that the real danger is about to start, and I'm getting a head start."_ He told her, before pulling back, kissing her on the cheek before letting her go and kneeling down beside the pile of bandages that had been wrapped around the foretold.

He pushed a couple aside, pulling out something that looked a bit like an artificial heart with a mass of something that reminded Rose of cassette tape ribbon hanging from it.

"Well, Gus," The Doctor said as he eyed the item in his hand. "I think we solved your little puzzle. Ancient soldier being driven by malfunctioning tech." He brought it over to a work station, withdrew his own sonic, and began working on it."

"Thank you so much for your efforts." Gus replied enthusiastically. "They are greatly appreciated. Unfortunately, survivors of this exercise are not required."

"Fancy that." Rose remarked.

"Air will now be removed from the cars. We hope you have enjoyed your journey on the Orient Express." Gus replied, lights flickering out as the air began to leave the space they were in. Nearly immediately, many in the room started struggling for air.

"Need help?" Rose asked, feeling dizzy already, her chest feeling tight.

The Doctor smiled at her. "You already have."

He pressed a button, and the room went hazy before Rose's vision returned better than it had been.

"Welcome aboard." The Doctor announced, arms spread wide as he gestured about the console room. "Sorry about the mess, Rose and I weren't expecting company."

As those that shared the train car with them started breathing normal and looked about in confusion, the Doctor moved to the controls.

Rose staggered over and began to help him.

The TARDIS shook, humming a grumble.

"What was that?" Rose asked the Doctor, leaning to look around the rotor at him.

"Gus blowing up the cars. I asked him to let the rest of the train go, hopefully he didn't blow that up to."

"Why would he do that?" Quell asked.

"Because I got us out of there, and he didn't like that." The Doctor said. "So, nearest civilized planet is a resort mecca. Anyone have an issue with beaches?"

~DWDWDW~

Rose over looked the ocean of the resort planet from a small balcony. The sheet from the bed was wrapped around her tightly, and she had no fear that it would come undone. She could see families reuniting on the sand below, those from the Orient Express having heard what happened to the doctors or scientists the were traveling with and immediately returned to them.

She smiled, thinking of her own daughters, the one about to become a mother herself and the one who maintained she would never allow anyone to be that close to her. Not after all she went through with her biological parents.

"Your thoughts are screaming," The Doctor said, trousers and oxford on, but hardly looking put together. He carried over two champagne flutes, though the liquid inside didn't bubble. "Very rarely do we get days like this, where nearly everyone lives. Even better that it happened to us on such a milestone."

Rose smiled at him as she took the glass. "Anniversary was yesterday." She noted.

"We're in a different time zone, as it were." The Doctor countered, eyes alight with mischief and joy. "Here it is yesterday. Which means, it's still our anniversary. And this," he said, lifting the glass in gesture. "Was a gift of thanks from Quell, for saving his life."

Rose beamed. "That's lovely," She said, clinking her flute against the Doctor's before taking a sip. She grimaced. "Though the wine is decidedly not." She said before shuddering, the Doctor's laugh booming.

"Well, thought that counts." He set the flute on the railing without trying it, and Rose put hers next to his. "I think maybe we should take Clara on a trip, a simple one to apologize. Maybe she can bring P.E."

"Danny." Rose corrected.

"Whatever." He waved it off. "Maybe we can bring him along, too. Get to know him. Even if she is serious about not traveling with us anymore, can't let it go out like that."

Rose turned toward him, putting her arms around his neck and ignoring the way his eyes darted down to her cleavage for a moment as he put

his hands on her hips. "I think that sounds lovely." She agreed. "But not for a bit, yeah? We nearly died. Seconds away from death, we were, and you know what? Realized that a thousand years with you wasn't enough. I want more. I want so much more." She played with the hairs on the back of his neck, loving how he smiled with amusement while radiating self assurance. "So let's take a day or two, spending it just us, and then we'll talk 'bout going back and giving Clara a last hurrah."

"A thousand years aren't enough? Well, can't argue that." He said, pulling her close. He dipped his head, giving her a kiss that started off sweet enough, but turned much more aggressive and carnal.

It was broken by the sound of a ringing phone. Rose's cell phone, sitting on the night stand where she had left it early.

"Don't answer it." He begged.

Rose rolled her eyes and stepped out of his grip. He tried sending her images through the bond to entice her to return, but seeing the name on the phone made them ineffectual.

"Jenny?" She answered.

"It's time, Mum. Baby's coming." Jenny replied, nervous and breathy.

"Be right there." Rose replied. She turned to her husband who had come in from the balcony, awaiting expectantly at the foot of the bed. She smiled. "Change of plans, Granddad. We have a baby girl to meet."

The Doctor paled, eyes wide. "What?" He said before a smile broke out over his face. "Haha!" He cheered, closing the distance between them and scooping Rose up, spinning her around. "But, first things first. I have some unfinished business to attend to with you." He said as he eyed her over, pupils going wider.

"Daughter about to have a baby, kinda needs us there." Rose reminded him.

"And we have a time machine." The Doctor reminded her. "We can meet Olivia in a couple days and not have to worry about missing her being born."

Rose couldn't argue that, didn't want to, really.

So she didn't.

* * *

><p>AN:** As promised, and Encore with 12, a glimpse into their lives.

Thank you to the readers, favoriters, followers, and reviewers. If I can answer anything post-story, I will.

End
file.